



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: October 18, 2023.

Time: 7:15 PM – 9:15 PM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes

Attendees:

- Executive committee: Christopher Tonkin., Linda Epstein (pending)., Muris Kobaslija., Jack Johnson., Doug Mayo-Wells., Adam MacNeill., Scott Smith (TAC liaison).
- Town of Arlington: John Alessi (Senior Transportation Planner)., Officer Vanuti.
- Members of the Public: Len Greenberg., Paul Morgan.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Christopher Tonkin notifies attendees that the meeting is held online pursuant to the order of Governor (as extended) and that Doug Mayo-Wells is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved. Tonkin confirms the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of outstanding meeting from previous meetings.

ABAC voted to approve the September minutes. Proposed by Scott Smith, seconded by Adam MacNeill, carried with one abstention.

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

Officer mentions that it is important for cyclists to stay in the bike lane and remain visible.

4. Debrief from September Meeting.

September minutes are available at

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/67248/638333268603700000>.

5. Family bike ride starting at Magnolia field on Sun 11/3.

Paul Morgan discusses the 3rd annual Halloween family bike ride (familybikeride.org) for kids and parents, scheduled for Sunday November 3rd at 9:30am. The organization has a goal of promoting biking, and runs spring, summer, and fall events in the Boston area. Approximately 300 participants are expected.

ABAC recommends contacting East Arlington Livable Streets for assistance promoting the event.

6. Mass Ave / Appleton Revised Design

ABAC submitted a letter recommending adoption of the proposed design to the Select Board, and the Board approved the design in a 3-1 vote on September 27.

Construction-ready plans will be available to review in December or January. The Town will submit a Massworks application for construction funding in the spring, and hopes to start construction in calendar year 2025.

Final construction plans should take into account the bicycle design speed. Although 15mph is typical, it is easy for cyclists to reach 20-25mph on the eastbound (downhill) approach to the intersection.

7. Town Day debrief.

Weather was mostly good. ABAC had a lot of interest with approximately 20 signups for the information list. Lights and most of the free BlueBike adventure passes were distributed.

It is noted that the TAC banner would benefit from an update.

The committee continues to hear citizen complaints about ebikes on the Minuteman bikeway. (Although human powered bikes can achieve the same speeds, ebikes have more mass and correspondingly more momentum. Lexington has installed signs communicating safety best practice and speed advisories of 15mph.

8. Report on recent local advocacy events.

Jack Johnson recently attended 2 events (he notes that Massbike.org email list is a good source of event info).

“Pedal Power” at the Museum of Science on September 30

https://www.massbike.org/pedal_power_celebrating_community_through_biking_209230930

This event focused on promoting regional bike advocacy. Speakers included Cara Seiderman, a Transportation Program Manager for the City of Cambridge, and recipient of the 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP); Anne Lusk on the physiology of male, female, and child cyclists; and Montell Khaldi from Bikes not Bombs on mobility justice. Many local bike advocacy organizations had tables at the event.

“Golden Spike 2023” conference on October 14 and after party

<https://www.gs2023.org/>

This event focused on rail-to-trail conversion. The Mass Central Rail Trail will connect Boston and Northampton when complete, nearly 60 miles of the projected 104 miles are now open. <https://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/> Craig Della Penna (Norwottuck Network Board chair), Ben Gustafson (Framingham Bicycle Pedestrian and Trails Committee chair and former ABAC founder), and Peter Sutton (Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the Massachusetts Office of Transportation Planning) were involved in the event.

9. Hardy School PTO Bike Rodeo.

Hardy Safe Routes to School Committee is planning a bike rodeo for Walk, Bike, and Roll to School day (first Wednesday of May). ABAC could possibly allocate some of its budget to support, if the budget is not already committed.

10. ABAC Budget Spending.

John Alessi mentions that the Town Health & Human Services department is planning a spring “Return to Biking” event with subsidized BlueBike sign ups for low income residents.

Scott Smith also mentions a new low-cost visual technology for multi-modal traffic counts. The devices can be placed in windows and do not have to be weatherproofed. The resolution is adequate to distinguish between trucks, cars, cyclists, pedestrians, but can not be used to identify individuals, so privacy concerns should be minimal. A year-long pilot would cost approximately \$400.

11. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Report.

Scott Smith shares updates from TAC meeting on Oct. 11

- TAC felt that the joint Town Day booth was successful and would be supportive of a joint TAC/ABAC banner.

- Chestnut St. work is moving forward, green paint on the bike lane may be the final thing to be installed.
- Painting on Warren St. will start soon.
- DPW is still working to adjust signal timing at Lake St/Bikeway.
- Re-surfacing on Broadway is scheduled for 2025. Citizens have expressed interest in making Broadway more pedestrian friendly (particularly the Warren St and Rt. 16 intersections. It would be beneficial to start the community engagement process early.

John Alessi mentions that it is likely a project to align Arlington with the Somerville/DCR west Broadway St. project will be announced in the near future.

12. Planning and Community Development Department Updates.

John Alessi shares updates from the department:

- a) Bike lanes on Medford St will be installed in the spring. Designs will be shared in November, grant will be submitted in December for Boston Metropolitan Planning Office (MPO) community connections funding.
- b) The department has some funding for bike-related projects and is planning to submit capital planning requests in June. Suggestions from ABAC on projects to prioritize are welcomed.
 - The committee suggests a number of possible projects: addressing root damage, surveying/addressing damage along the edge of the Bikeway, installing signage on the bikeway, doing a pilot of bikeway lighting (possibly west of Mill St, where headlight glare is a problem), improving the bikeway/Gold's Gym intersection, or improving the bikeability of Pleasant Street.
- c) The Mystic St to Bikeway project has been approved through MassDOT project review committee; can coordinate with Boston MPO and start the design process. The project will go through Boston MPO transportation equipment program; construction is likely 5-10 years out.
- d) Minuteman Wayfinding project update, signage (both to and from the Bikeway) is being developed for installation in the Center and the Heights in spring 2024
- e) David Morgan (DPCD liaison to Open Space Committee) is interested in expanding recreational activities beyond team sports and wants to explore offering biking classes through the recreation department. Historically it has been hard to get enough signups for the classes to be viable. Linda Epstein suggests that Hurd field's paved track might be good for beginners, and that the Res might be good for learning to ride on gravel
- f) Minuteman and BlueBike data is reviewed – curves are similar to last year, module the Orange line shutdown, which increased BlueBike usage

13. Tri-Town Meeting agenda.

The Tri-town meeting will be held virtually on October 25. Christopher Tonkin will share the agenda with Lexington and Bedford

Tentative agenda:

- a) Updates from each community
- b) Plans for the Bikeway that could involve capital expenses (bid from multiple jurisdictions)
- c) Making the Bikeway more inclusive (ensuring compliance with ADA regulations)
- d) Response to recent State e-bike legislation

Additional items for potential discussion, time-permitting:

- Bluebike usage
- Reformatory Branch extension
- Bikeway signage
- Lexington repaving

14. October meeting – Zoom or hybrid?

ABAC agreed that the November 15 meeting will be conducted as a hybrid meeting. (Note: the Committee moved the November 15 meeting to remote only subsequent to the meeting.)

15. Any other business.

John Alessi reminds ABAC members that they are required to complete the conflict of interest online training before the November meeting (unless they completed it in 2022).

Muris Kobaslija mentions that AM commuter congestion on Mass Ave results in cars blocking crosswalks, and suggested “don’t block the box” boxes (as in Cambridge) may be helpful. Scott Smith adds that a recent EALS count conducted between 7 and 8am observed drivers merging into the bus lane at Thorndike St. Officer Venuti says that APD is aware of these issues.

Christopher Tonkin received correspondence from Jeff Roth about bikeability concerns, but they relate to pavement work that is planned.

Christopher Tonkin mentions the new water fountain/bottle filling station in Lexington, which was sponsored by the Chinese American Association of Lexington (who also host the AAPI 5K Run’n’Walk Lexington event). They are interested in sponsoring a similar station in Arlington, possibly in the Center near the Uncle Sam statue.

FoodLink has also sponsored water filling stations by Hurd field and Thorndike field.

Inadequate or inaccessible bike parking remains a challenge throughout the Town:

- For events such as the Beer Garden at the Jefferson-Cutter house, both permanent parking and temporary event parking would be beneficial.
- Christopher Tonkin received correspondence about bike parking at Brackett Elementary, where a bike rack is unavailable due to placement of recycling bins. There are additional concerns about the behavior of motorists during drop-off time. Officer Vanuti advises forwarding the correspondence about motorist behavior to Officer Rateau.
- The bike rack at Fox library is also temporarily blocked by a voting drop box.
- Bike racks in front of Town Hall have not been reinstalled following the plaza reconstruction. (The rack by the annex is small, and not easy for visitors to find.)

The safety markings by Trader Joes/Hurd field are completely illegible and need to be repainted. The center line should also be repainted (contributes to bikeway safety by setting expectations of where bikeway users should be).

Doug Mayo-Wells has photographed the worst instances of root damage on the Bikeway and is working to plot them on a map. Temporary warning signs are also suggested as a means to both mitigate the risk of injury to bikeway users and identify the problematic locations to DPW.

16. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.